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## Press Release

### **Kerala Tourism keeps state's banner flying Down Under**

*Department conducts successful road show campaign in major Australian cities*

**Thiruvananthapuram, Oct 31:** To tap deeper into what is the sixth biggest tourist market for the state, Kerala Tourism conducted high-energy road shows in Australia advertising the best of 'God's Own Country' in the hub cities of Melbourne and Sydney over the past week.

The road shows – held after a gap of two years – each saw attendance from around 70 leading wholesalers, tour operators and travel agents from these cities, generating significant interest in both new and established offerings in Kerala. With inbound tourism from Australia on the uptick – accounting for 35,244 foreign tourist arrivals in 2015, the campaign was particularly timely ahead of the official start to the tourist season in November.

Kerala Tourism Director Shri U.V. Jose led a strong delegation that included representatives of 12 major players from across the state's tourism trade industry. The participating trade partners included Abad Hotels & Resorts, CGH Earth, Chalukya Grace Tours Pvt. Ltd., Discover Kerala Holidays, Eastend Hotels & Resorts, Intersight Tours & Travels (P) Ltd., Kumarakom Lake Resort, Marvel Tours Pvt. Ltd., Pioneer Personalized Holidays and Spice Routes.

"Kerala is already a well-known brand in Australia. Upon seeing the surge in tourist arrivals from this lucrative emerging market, both the Government and tourism stakeholders were keen to better explore and exploit the potential. We hope our strong showing at these road shows will lead to more industry tie-ups and greater tourist footfalls to Kerala," said Minister for Tourism Shri A.C. Moideen, who reiterated the government's commitment of top-down support to the sector.

Besides facilitating business to business meetings to help forge new collaborations, the road shows saw presentations on Kerala's diverse array of attractions and destinations from Shri Jose. The award-winning promotional film, *The Great Backwaters*, which showcases life in and around the state's legendary backwaters through stunning aerial and underwater photography, was screened at both events.

"With improved air-connectivity and ease-of-travel between the Asia-Pacific region and Kerala, there has been an impressive growth in arrivals from Down Under. By increasing the state's exposure in major metropolises and focusing on its new tourism products, experiences and hitherto untapped destinations, this trend figures to only continue upward," said Dr Venu V., Principal Secretary (Tourism), Kerala.



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Lending heft to the campaign were Shri Rakesh Malhotra, Consul of India, Melbourne, and Dr Vinod Bahade, Deputy Consul General, Sydney, who were both chief guests at the events in their respective cities.

In addition, the events featured interactive sessions including 'Go Kerala' contests with the lucky draw prize of a seven-night, eight-day holiday in Kerala given to one lucky winner in each city. Silk Air, the campaign's airlines partner, offered the winners a free return ticket from Australia to Kerala in Singapore Airlines/Silk Air flights.

"The campaign offered a glimpse of what awaits travellers to Kerala and promised that much more lay in store. It elicited a highly enthusiastic response from the Australian tourism and trade industry with a high-volume of fruitful B2B interactions between our sellers and their buyers. We are positive that this will translate into both greater business linkages and tourist arrivals," Shri Jose said.

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